



ARTICLE ALERT

Information Resource Center, September 2011

Halloween Celebration



Dressing in costume and begging for candy are popular Halloween activities for children.

Holiday with Ancient Origins Celebrates Life

By Jane Morse,
September 15, 2011

Washington — As the northern hemisphere begins its wintery sleep and the nights grow longer, the spirits of the dead seem eerily near to the living each

October 31, Halloween.

That's when Americans kick up their heels and party!

While not an official holiday, Halloween is much beloved by children in the United States, for whom the day is a chance to don costumes — often depicting ghosts, monsters and other “supernatural” creatures — and to collect candy and other treats from adults. Plenty of adults also celebrate the occasion by attending costume parties, although they often dress as celebrities, political candidates and other public figures.

Halloween is one of the oldest holidays still observed in the Western world. Once the most important day of the year for the ancient Celtic peoples, Samhain, as it was known then, was believed to be a time when the souls of the dead were set free for one night to roam the earth. Bonfires were lit to help guide these souls back to the land of the dead and to frighten them away from the living. Offerings of food were made to appease potentially threatening spirits.

With the spread of Christianity, the souls of saints and all the dead were remembered on November 1 and 2. October 31 became known

as “All Hallows’ Eve,” from which “Halloween” is derived.

These days, according to the most recent Census Bureau estimates, some 41 million children dressed as otherworldly creatures visit homes in their neighborhoods, calling “Trick or Treat!” Those within give out candy to appease these modern “apparitions.”

Many youth forgo candy in favor of Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF, collecting money in small boxes distributed by the United Nations Children’s Fund. American children have collected nearly \$164 million this way, with the proceeds funding education, immunization and other programs in the developing world. Read more at: <http://goo.gl/YzevN>

Having Fun While Keeping Old Traditions Alive



People have been carving jack-o'-lanterns for centuries at Halloween, and it's a custom that continues to delight Americans young and old. Pumpkin carving can

become so elaborate as to be a work of art, and there are competitions for every skill level.

Jack-o'-lanterns recall an Irish legend about a man who tried to outwit the devil and was condemned to wander the earth for eternity using as a lantern a lighted ember in a carved turnip. His spirit is among the many that allegedly roam the earth every October 31, the day the ancient Celtic peoples believed brought the souls of the dead in closest contact with the living.

Although Halloween may be about the spirits of the dead, the living want to have fun!

Source: <http://goo.gl/nflVH>

U.S. Embassy Jakarta Mission Statement

Based on mutual respect and shared values, the U.S

Mission works with Indonesia to strengthen democracy, sustain the environment, promote prosperity, enhance understanding and ensure security for our people, our nations, and our region.

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DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL ISSUES

1. Baron, Jeff **WOMEN STILL HAVE LIMITED ROLE IN NEWS MEDIA** (IIP Digital.usembassy.gov, September 23, 2011)

A worldwide study finds that the hands that shape news coverage are overwhelmingly male. The largest-ever study of women's roles in the news media finds some countries in which women are well represented among professionals who cover the news and among their editors, managers and company board members. In most countries, though, men in journalism outnumber women by a more than 2-to-1 ratio, and the difference is even greater among upper managers. The two-year study commissioned by the International Women's Media Foundation found that women are outnumbered by a nearly 3-to-1 ratio in the news industry's top positions. Read more at <http://goo.gl/ukXXl>. Complete report is available at <http://www.iwmf.org/pdfs/IWMF-Global-Report.pdf>

2. McConnell, Kathryn **HELP FOR INDONESIA'S NEWBORNS** (IIP Digital.usembassy.gov, September 16, 2011)



An Indonesian midwife trained by Jhpiego checks on a patient.

Women in Indonesia are getting skilled assistance before, during and after the birth of their children thanks to a midwife training program funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development's Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program. Since 1997, Jhpiego, USAID's lead partner in maternal and child health, has trained thousands of urban and rural midwives in Indonesia in maternal and newborn health and in family planning. USAID partners Save the Children, and JSI also provide midwife training in Indonesia. Read more: <http://goo.gl/pBA5t>

eJournal USA: Climate Action Goes Local



As a global phenomenon, climate change is an issue that we usually look to the international community to address. Local communities, however, are increasingly taking the lead in developing innovative, grass-roots approaches to mitigating and combating the causes and effects of global warming. According to a study by the United Nations Development Program most investments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to climate

change must take place at the local level. In the United States, local governments and private citizens have been collaborating to curb those emissions, without waiting for solutions at the national or international level.

This issue of eJournal USA examines what it means to think globally about climate change — and to act locally. "Climate Action Goes Local" shows how communities and nongovernmental groups worldwide are initiating programs that counter climate change, and why leadership from local officials and buy-in from local populations and businesses are necessary for such programs to be effective. This eJournal USA available online in IIP Digital website at <http://goo.gl/RPbWS>

ECONOMIC SECURITY

3. Kunstler, James Howard **BACK TO THE FUTURE: A ROADMAP FOR TOMORROW'S CITIES** (Orion, July-August 2011)

The heyday of suburbia and skyscraper-studded cities as we know them is palpably waning, writes Kunstler. The decreasing availability of fossil fuels and impinging climate change ensure the end of energy-intensive city structures, cheap air and motor transport and high-tech farming. According to Kunstler, the future will be smaller-scale neighborhoods and walkable towns clustered around local food and water resources; lucky ones will be linked by railways. Development without any limitation and a belief in "technomagic" have ironically created "places with no magic, no power to enchant the human spirit," and despite "technograndiose" ideas about the future, our trajectory, by necessity, is likely a return to a human-sized, textured, localized lifestyle. Currently available online at <http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/6336/>

4. Pettis, Michael **AN EXORBITANT BURDEN** (Foreign Policy, posted September 7, 2011)

Michael Pettis argues that keeping the U.S. dollar as the world's reserve currency imposes significant costs on the U.S. economy. He rejects as false a popular perception that, thanks to its currency's status, the U.S. enjoys low interest rates and ability to borrow and consume beyond its means. Instead, foreign accumulation of U.S. dollar assets causes the huge U.S. trade deficit, the low level of savings and high levels of private and public debt or makes these three conditions worse, Pettis says. But Washington is reluctant to create rules that would prevent countries from accumulating U.S. dollars for fear that such rules would signal a relative decline in the power of the U.S. economy. Calls for making an IMF basket of currencies — known as the Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) — the new global reserve currency are insincere at best, for no country is willing to accumulate SDRs, because of trade constraints.



INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

5. Drezner, Daniel **DOES OBAMA HAVE A GRAND STRATEGY? WHY WE NEED DOCTRINES IN UNCERTAIN TIMES** (Foreign Affairs, Vol. 90, no. 4, July/August 2011, pp. 57-68)

Drezner, Professor of International Politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, writes that with the U.S. military intervention in Libya, many foreign-policy observers have bemoaned the supposed lack of a grand strategy within the Obama administration. Despite of what his critics say, Drezner notes that the Obama administration has not had just one grand strategy, but two. The first, which he calls multilateral retrenchment, is designed to restore U.S. standing in the world by curtailing our overseas commitments and relying on global partners to assume part of the burden. The second strategy is “counterpunching” – actions aimed at reassuring allies that the U.S. will respond to rising threats and will not retreat into isolationism. Drezner believes that Obama needs to articulate his grand strategy more clearly, otherwise his critics and opponents will do it for him in less than flattering terms.

6. Kaplan, Robert **THE SOUTH CHINA SEA IS THE FUTURE OF CONFLICT** (Foreign Policy, no. 188, September/October 2011, pp. 76-85)

The crucial difference between the 20th and 21st centuries, notes Kaplan, is that most of the contested areas in the world lay on dry land in Europe. In recent decades, more of the global economic and demographic center of gravity has shifted to Asia, where the spaces between major population

centers are predominantly maritime. Kaplan predicts that the Western Pacific will become the world's new center of military contest, and will be primarily naval. Unlike land warfare, which enmeshes civilian populations, naval conflict is a more “clinical and technocratic affair ... returning military affairs to the narrow realm of defense experts.” He believes that the U.S. may, over time, have to adjust to the reality of a Chinese deep-water navy; although competition is a given, armed conflict is far from inevitable. If China and the U.S. successfully manage a balance, Asia and the world could become more secure and prosperous. Currently available online at <http://goo.gl/mXlrf>

7. Traub, James **THE ALL-AMERICAN** (New York Times Magazine, July 17, 2011)

The author notes that after Barack Obama won the U.S. presidency in 2008, John Kerry, then the junior senator from Massachusetts, very much wanted to be named secretary of state, a job for which he felt qualified as a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. However, Obama picked New York senator and former First Lady Hillary Clinton instead. In 2009, Kerry has been able to practice his own brand of diplomacy as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; he has become a kind of ex-officio member of Obama's national security team, which has dispatched him to conflict zones such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sudan. Kerry's willingness to travel anywhere he is needed, and stay as long as necessary, has won him Obama's gratitude. Currently available online at <http://goo.gl/gY6Ty>

U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES

8. Gottlieb, Lori **HOW TO LAND YOUR KID IN THERAPY** (Atlantic Monthly, July/August 2011)

Is it possible for parents to do too much for their children? Yes, says therapist and mother Lori Gottlieb. It is possible that parents, by trying to protect their children from unhappiness, deprive them of happiness as adults. Overprotected children grow into adults who think something must be terribly wrong when they experience the normal frustrations of life. Kids need exposure to discomfort, failure, and struggle to learn how to be resilient and persevere -- qualities that lead to life fulfillment and success. And despite the spate of articles in recent years exploring why so many people in their 20s seem reluctant to grow up, the problem may be less that kids are refusing to separate and individuate than that their parents are resisting doing so. With families having fewer children and society offering less of a close-knit community, it may be that parents cling too closely to their children for companionship. Currently available online at <http://goo.gl/Llqw6>

9. McCullough, David **SAMUEL MORSE'S REVERSAL OF FORTUNE** (Smithsonian, vol. 42, no. 5, September 2011, pp. 80-88)

Samuel F.B. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, had set his hopes on being a painter since his college days. However, a series of setbacks and disappointments, the death of his wife, an ill-advised candidacy for the mayor of New York City under the anti-immigrant Nativist party, had by 1838 left him despondent, and he quit painting for good. The author notes, however, that if Morse had not stopped painting when he did, his home tinkering would not have resulted in the invention of the electromagnetic telegraph. After quitting his art, Morse focused on the crude device in his New York apartment. By opening and closing an electrical circuit, signals of dots and dashes could be translated into letters by a receiving apparatus. Key to his invention was a series of electromagnetic relays that would place no limit on the distance a message could be transmitted. After a series of successful tests, Morse “electrified” Washington with a demonstration of the telegraph in the Capitol, in the presence of President van Buren. Available online at <http://goo.gl/hypil>

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